

Aiken Chapter MOAA
The Courier October 2026



Board Members

PRESIDENT: Col Mike Gossett (540-842-0438)

1st VICE PRESIDENT: COL Lynda Mann (703)
328-7603

2nd VICE PRESIDENT: TBA

TREASURER: Maj Dan Meischen (713) 857-5710

SECRETARY: Capt Brent Caldwell (803) 226-
0546

MEETING COORDINATOR: Capt Barbara
McKnight (315-723-6185)

CHAPLAIN: CPT Edward Schneider
(703) 851-4918

LEGISLATIVE LIAISON: COL David Lobb (803)
270-8690

JROTC LIAISON: CPT Greg Burkes (803) 645-
0693

SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON: Sharon Smoot
(803) 642-1292

COURIER EDITOR: CPT Jeanne Townes (803)
439-3303

Mailing Address: 262 Eastgate Dr #239 Aiken, SC
29803

*****All newsletters are sent by email.**

IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Message

October Meeting

Committee Highlight

Chapter Events

Local Veteran Events

Surviving Spouse Corner

Cheddar Up

Veteran Assistance

News From National

Important Links

For the Good of the Order

....AND MUCH MORE





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Col Mike Gossett, USAF

As we welcome the cooler weather, it's a great time to reflect on our chapter's strong history and the exciting future ahead. Fall is an ideal time to review our accomplishments and set our sights on what lies ahead.

Looking ahead to 2027, it's remarkable how quickly it will arrive. Our chapter is strategically positioned to reach new heights during this period, allowing us to positively influence not only our members but also the broader community. Our collective strength is rooted in the bonds we share as we support our military personnel, veterans, veteran families, caregivers, and JROTC students in the area. Together, we can rise to the challenges ahead and ensure we make a meaningful impact.

With that in mind, I want to emphasize the importance of our upcoming "State of the Chapter" meeting on October 12 from 10 AM to 12 PM at the Aiken County Historical Museum. This event is an excellent opportunity for all of us to come together, share insights, and discuss our goals. How can we best achieve this ambitious vision? The answer lies in staying informed and engaged. The October meeting will be especially valuable, offering insight into our chapter's goals and initiatives. Additionally, I encourage everyone to continue participating in our regularly scheduled dinner meetings. These gatherings are vital touchpoints that help us connect, exchange ideas, and strengthen the bonds that make our chapter such a vibrant community.

I want to thank you again for the privilege of serving as your president; it is truly an honor to work alongside such dedicated individuals. I also extend my gratitude to all the board members for their tireless efforts in making our chapter one of the strongest in the state. I encourage you to reach out with any ideas, concerns, or issues that matter to you and our community. Your voices are essential, and together we can navigate the path ahead to create a brighter future for everyone. Let's continue to support one another and build on the solid foundation we have established. To quote the motto from Frank Siller's Tunnel to Towers Foundation: "Let us do Good."

NEVER STOP SERVING,

Mike Gosset, Col, USAF (Ret)

Aiken Chapter MOAA President





October Meeting Menu

October 7, 2026

Newberry Hall

Happy Half-Hour 1800

Meeting and Dinner 1830

Preset Salad w/ house-made dressing

Chicken Piccata

Chef's choice starch

Seasonal vegetables

Preset dessert

Preset Water and Tea

Coffee Station

Cash Bar

Dress Code: Business Casual

\$30/person Checks preferred made out to Aiken Chapter MOAA

Deadline for Reservation: October 2, 2026

RSVP: MOAAAIKEN@gmail.com (803) 315-726-1853

Reservation via Cheddar:

<https://aiken-chapter-October-7-dinner-meeting.cheddarup.com>

or scan the QR Code below





Welcome to our new member:

Roy Walker, LtCol, USAF (ret)



Aiken Chapter October Meetings

Mark your calendars :

October 7, 2026 – Newberry Hall 1800 hours

Our October presentation, “South Carolina History is American History” by Dr. Elizabeth Crow will focus on the ways the story of South Carolina, from the earliest colonization through the Revolution, is the story of the nation. Topics covered include the Spanish colony of Santa Elena in the 16th century, settlement by Englishmen from Barbados in the late 17th century, the leadership of South Carolinians in the lead to the Revolution, and the importance of South Carolina in the winning of our independence.

October 12, 2026 – Aiken Historical Museum – State of the Chapter – 1000 hours -1200 hours

The first Aiken Chapter **MOAA Annual Meeting** to highlight all the great things our chapter offers for our members, our fellow veterans, and our community. Please join us to hear from our chapter leaders about where your dues money goes, how charities are chosen for grants, volunteer opportunities, and a host of other information you may have been wondering about but haven’t had a chance to ask.

Additional details about the Annual Meeting will be shared in future email blasts and at the **October 7 monthly Aiken MOAA chapter meeting**. Meanwhile, **feel free to respond to this message if you have any questions**.

Please mark your calendars for **Monday, October 12** (Columbus Day holiday) from **10 AM -noon at Banksia** (aka Aiken County Museum), [433 Newberry St SW](#). A continental breakfast will be served.

Excerpt from: CPT Linda Caldwell’s email announcement.

Future Chapter Events

November 4, 2026 – Chapter Meeting Newberry Hall 1800 hours

Speaker: TBD ***Christmas Angel/Santa Stocking Program Kick Off

November 7, 2026 – Veteran’s Day Parade – 1100 hours in

Downtown Aiken -see flyer announcement page 8

December 2, 2026 – Chapter Meeting Newberry Hall 1800 hours

Speaker/Entertainment: Jim Albert, Chair, SC MOAA Council, topic:

“George Washington – Family Man and Nation Builder”

January 6, 2027 – Chapter Meeting Newberry Hall 1800 hours Speaker:

Lt. Col. (ret) Mike Ware Presentation: “Last Patrol”

Veterans know about patrolling land, sea, and air. Veterans in hospice are on their final fight and in their last patrol. Whether it goes by the name “battle buddy” or “shipmate” or “wingman” --- all veterans understand that tough assignments are best faced together.

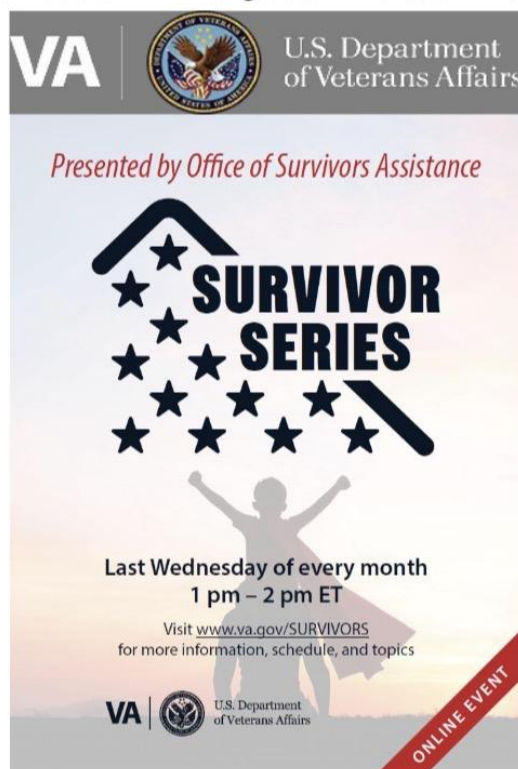
This presentation shares how **Last Patrol** connects veteran volunteers to veterans in hospice. We cooperate with medical providers of hospice care to connect volunteers to the patients so that their last patrol isn’t alone. It’s hard to overestimate the importance of friendship during end-of-life care. Last Patrol brings new friendships when friendship matters most.

Surviving Spouse Corner



The Survivor Series is a space to empower survivors with insightful guidance & support. Join us on the last Wednesday of every month from 1pm-2pm ET.

Check out this website: www.va.gov/survivors/Survivor_Series.asp



This particular series is the last Wednesday of every month 1:00-2:00pm ET; less than one hour. It's an educational for survivors in receipt of VA survivor benefits, but also for veteran spouses and veterans who want to learn more about survivor benefits.

Just when you think you know enough about benefits, you may learn about a little gem of information that is useful and previously unknown.

Upcoming Veteran Events



THE WELLNESS COLLECTIVE

Food & Fellowship

Monthly - Every Third Friday

The New Ellenton Community Center
212 Pine Hill Ave, New Ellenton, SC 29809

A welcoming space for veterans and their families to connect, find support, and access resources — including Peer Support Specialists, the Pathfinder Program, and assistance navigating VA claims. Prepared take-home meals and emergency food boxes available to all while supplies last. There is no cost to attend.

11:30 AM – Doors Open | Coffee & Connection

12:00 PM - Lunch Served & Meal Distribution

12:00-2:00 PM - VA Claims Assistance

Offered in partnership with Golden Harvest and
The City of New Ellenton Parks and Recreation

For More Information
wellnesscollectives@gmail.com



Chapter Committee Spotlight



Christmas Angel/Operation ST. Nick

Operation ST. Nick: Coordinator: CPT (fmr) Linda Caldwell

Supported by the Christmas Angel Committee

The Aiken County Veterans Council (ACVC) has conducted “Operation St. Nick,” providing filled Christmas stockings to Aiken County veterans residing in local nursing homes. The stockings are filled by members of the veteran service organizations and include such things as bed socks, toiletries, crossword puzzle books, and other individual items. (The ACVC provides a list of acceptable items for the stockings.



Christmas Angel Program:

The Aiken Chapter MOAA demonstrates support for veteran families with minor children attending USCA. The Aiken Chapter MOAA members support this endeavor by buying gifts for the minor children of veteran families with a parent attending USCA or gift cards for the vetted single veteran w/need. Suggested maximum amount of \$50.00. Ornaments are provided at the November meeting, and gifts are delivered at the December meeting. The program is a collaboration of the Aiken Chapter MOAA and the Military and Veteran Success Transition Center at USCA.

Committee members: CPT (fmr) Jeanne Townes, Ruth Herrera, and Patricia Lobb.





... HOW TO ACCESS THE AIKEN CHAPTER'S WEBSITE?

To access the website you must go through the SC Council's website (www.moaasc/aiken) BUT you can click on the link

here: [Aiken Chapter](#)

... HOW TO OPEN IMBEDDED LINKS IN OUR COURIER?

Many of us are challenged by many of today's technological advances. We incorporate links into our documents to make it easier to access information. By placing the cursor just under the link and pressing the ctrl button on your keyboard a hand (with a finger pointing to the link) will appear. Then just one click and you are at the imbedded website.

CHEDDAR UP

The Cheddar Up! online payment plan system is a service of MOAA national to help chapters and councils with dues payment, meeting registrations, and other financial functions. This online system simplifies membership management for chapters and councils by offering secure payment processing and customizable member experiences. It streamlines record-keeping and reduces administrative burdens while enhancing the MOAA brand.

After extensive preparation and testing, the Aiken Chapter has implemented the Cheddar Up! Program this month. Goals of Cheddar Up! are:

Make it easier to join a chapter, renew membership, or make financial contributions

Simplify tracking payments, collection of information from members, and record keeping

Cheddar Up! was implemented by MOAA national and any associated fees are paid by them. There is no cost to any chapter or council.

We will customize the program to suit our needs:

Make reservations for dinner meetings AND pay in advance for meals

Pay annual membership dues

Make a charitable donation, such as a JROTC banquet table

Send event reminders

Make payments with credit card or e-checks

Provide electronic receipts for payments

For the dues page scan the QR Code below or you may go to our URL is <https://aiken-chapter-dues.cheddarup.com>

If you are unable or choose not to use the Cheddar Up! system to register for dinners or pay your dues, you can still make a dinner reservation with the Meeting Coordinator and pay at the door. For membership dues, you can pay by paper check mailed to the chapter mail box (address below).

Our mailing address:

Aiken Chapter- MOAA

262 Eastgate Drive #239

Aiken, SC 29803



LOCAL VETERAN ASSISTANCE

Aiken County Veterans Affairs: Major Dwight Bradham is the Aiken County Veterans Affairs Officer. He and his team can be reached at (803) 642- 1545 or dbradham@aikencountysc.gov by email. If you have any veteran issues, please contact the office.

US Congressman Joe Wilson - Veteran Assistance: The local number to Congressman Wilson's Aiken County office is (803) 642-6416. His State Senate office also regularly assists veterans with many issues. The number is (803) 212- 6000.

Veterans Legal Clinic: The USC School of Law operates the Veterans Legal Clinic. Veterans can inquire about help with a legal problem by calling (803) 777- 2278



Reminder From MOAA



Reminders from national MOAA to remain non-partisan in everything concerning MOAA

Partisan Political Activities: As organizations exempt from federal taxation under Sec. 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code, MOAA and its affiliates must take care to avoid engaging in partisan political activities. Under IRS rules, we are prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

Divisive Social Issues: We are all aware of the divisive nature of the debate over today's leading social issues – protesting during the national anthem at sporting events, racial justice, public protests, and the conduct of law enforcement officers. These are issues over which many Americans have deeply held, but differing, personal beliefs. This is also true within the military community among the ranks of active duty and retired officers and within MOAA itself.

MOAA leaders have an obligation to keep this in mind when communicating on behalf of MOAA or its affiliates. Suggesting that MOAA only supports one side of a deeply divisive issue sends a message to those with a different belief that MOAA is not for them. See the complete statements from MOAA: (click this link) [MOAA](#)
MOAA Guidance on Partisan Political Activities

More from MOAA National



NATIONAL MOAA's LEGISLATIVE MISSION: MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital. For more than 90 years, MOAA has supported legislation that benefits the uniformed services community and has remained equally vigilant when fighting to stop legislation that threatens our livelihood. The larger our numbers, the greater our voice. Legislative Accomplishments

NATIONAL MOAA's ADVOCACY IN ACTION: Please visit the national MOAA website (www.moaa.org) to learn more about MOAA's Key Advocacy Issues. Click on the Advocacy tab at the top of the homepage. Learn about such topics as Legislative Action Center and Accomplishments; Health Care; Family Issues; Guard and Reserve Issues; COLA; State Report Card; Advocacy News and Advocacy Leaders. The webpages have contact information and forms to help you reach out to your Congressional Representatives to advocate for these and other important issues.

Take a look at what is posted on the MOAA advocacy page this month: **The Susan E. Lukas 9/11 Servicemember Fairness Act (H.R. 5339)** extends the presumption of service connection to several conditions for those who served at the Pentagon Reservation from Sept. 11, 2001, to Nov. 19 of that year. (posted September 09) **To read more:** Click on [Advocacy](#)

KEEP CONNECTED: ensure you are signed up for The MOAA Newsletter and register as an advocate at the **Legislative Action Center**. Here's the link.

[MOAA: Legislative Advocacy Center](#)



IMPORTANT LINKS

Listed here are several links to contacts that members and friends of Aiken Chapter may find informative or helpful.

MOAA National: [MOAA](#)

Aiken Chapter MOAA: [Aiken](#)

****Please Note an application in PDF to Aiken Chapter is on the Home Page
OR you can **access the Aiken Chapter Membership application** here [PDF](#)

Department of Veteran Affairs: [DVA#](#)

Aiken County Veterans Affairs: [ACVet](#)

Aiken County Veteran's Council: [ACVC](#)

Lindsay Graham's Website: **Graham** – currently unavailable to access

Joe Wilson's Website: [Wilson](#)

Tim Scott's Website: [Scott](#)



For the Good of the Order

THE BEST YOU HAVE EVER DONE

Hey there Veteran allow me to ask

>>>> of what would become your greatest task

>>>> It's about that day you made up your mind

>>>> that you could become the military kind

>>>>

>>>> You kissed your loved ones and your youth goodbye

>>>> Got sworn in to give the service a try

>>>> You had to prove you were not just a kid

>>>> Turned out to be the best you ever did

>>>>

>>>> You swapped cool clothes, cool car and cozy bed

>>>> for a uniform and a cot instead

>>>> No more home cooking but company mess

>>>> Chow that gives new meaning to SOS

>>>>

>>>> You trained in an occupational skill

>>>> to be prepared in the event of war

>>>> You hoped that it eventually will

>>>> prove you qualified for so much more

>>>>

>>>> Then you were trained to operate a gun

>>>> and defend your ground when good sense said run

>>>> You heard that beat of that different drum

>>>> A different person you would become

>>>>

>>>> Then you eventually met that day

>>>> your country asked you to stand in harms way

>>>> Were you deployed in combat, ship at sea,

>>>> guarding skies of home,

>>>> freedoms guarantee

>>>> It doesn't matter

>>>> what the case may be

>>>> you did the job that makes sure we are free

>>>>

>>>> You reached the limit of all you could stand

>>>> and found you could endure every demand

>>>> The armed service is not for everyone

>>>> For you it was the best you've ever done

>>>>

>>>> When nice folks say; "Thank you for your service",

>>>> do you swell with pride or just get nervous?

>>>> No one expects you to be so modest

>>>> You are the one who has done the hardest

>>>>

>>>> It is said of those who answered the call

>>>> surely all gave some and then some gave all

>>>>

>>>> Jesus said; For love there's no greater one

>>>> than those that did the best they've ever done

>>>>

>>>> Tony DaVino OFS

>>>> 1Lt. Armor (fmr)